(b) Cruise Operator M/s. Ocean Cruises India Private Limited has been permitted to operate cruises from Goa to Lakshadweep *via* Cochin. Similarly Cruise Operator M/s. Star Cruises Limited has been permitted to operate cruises from Mumbai to Lakshadweep (Kadmat Island) and Mumbai to Goa.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Productivity of major ports

3243. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the productivity of major Indian ports is very low as compared to ports in developed nations;

(b) whether Government have planned any long-term modernization programme to upgrade ports;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by Government with regard to enhancing the standards of major ports with the International Standards?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) There is no validated system of benchmarking and/or universally accepted set of parameters on the basis of which the performance of various ports could be collated for arriving at definitive conclusions on relative performance. However, the efficiency parameters like Average out put per ship berth day, Average turn round time for major ports in India have been consistently improving over the years.

(b) to (d) Modernisation and development of the major ports in India is an on-going process keeping in view the demands of maritime trade. An outlay of Rs.4531.29 crores has been provided under the Tenth Plan for development of the major ports. In addition, private sector investment to the tune of Rs.11257 crore is also envisaged for development of major ports during the Tenth Plan period. The scheme for development of the major ports include deepening of channels to facilitate berthing of large size vessels, construction of new berths, upgradation/expansion of existing

berths, modernization of cargo handling equipments through fresh procurement as also upgradation/replacement of existing equipments, improvement in storage capacities, upgradation of internal circulation systems for smooth cargo movement within the port area, improved rail and road connectivity to hinterland, etc.

Losses due to Kanwar pilgrimage

†3244. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during religious Kanwar pilgrimage the Delhi-Meerut-Haridwar-Dehradun highways remains closed for motor vehicles;

(b) whether any assessment has been made to find out the losses suffered by both the States each year as a result of the closure of aforesaid highway;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have considered the proposal to construct an alternate route or whether concerned States have been consulted for this possibility; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps taken for keeping the said highway open for traffic during Kanwar Pilgrimage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No alternate route is under consideration of this Ministry.

(e) During religious Kanwar pilgrimage the traffic of National Highway is diverted to the State Roads.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.